

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Alaska Safety Handbook

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE

Alaska Safety Handbook

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INTRODUCTION

This Handbook lays the groundwork for incorporating safety and health into the planning of all NRCS work projects and tasks. This Handbook will assist supervisors in providing a safe and healthful workplace for employees and volunteers. It will provide employees with information on safe work practices, identification of hazards, and reporting of unsafe working conditions.

This Handbook is a tool that supports supervisors and managers in their responsibility to promote positive safety and health attitudes among employees and integrate safe procedure standards into all NRCS activities. Supervisors are responsible for recognizing and rewarding employees for outstanding performance in the area of occupational safety and health.

Every NRCS supervisor, employee, and volunteer is responsible for following safe work practices and procedures, and in identifying and reporting unsafe conditions. The purpose of this Handbook is to provide assistance in carrying out those responsibilities.

For the purposes of this Handbook, part-time employees, full-time employees, temporary employees, employees in student career experience programs, volunteers, or any individual authorized to utilize NRCS equipment and facilities in an official capacity, are referred to as employees. All employees are responsible for familiarizing themselves with this Handbook and for utilizing safe work practices and procedures during the performance of their duties.

The diverse work assignments in Alaska present unique working conditions and potential hazards to employees. This handbook cannot cover every situation an employee may encounter. There are times when an employee will have to rely on his or her best judgment alone. Whenever possible, an employee should first discuss and resolve such situations with his or her supervisor.

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SAFETY TRAINING

References

OSHA Standards and Regulations
Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970

Procedures

Supervisors are the key in establishing when, where, and how to do each job safely, ensuring the proper use and care of personal protective equipment or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) property. Supervisors shall ensure that their employees receive the training necessary to safely perform job tasks. The supervisor may obtain assistance for developing and conducting safety training from qualified and experienced employees, State Safety Officer, Safety Regional Coordinators, private industry, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Environmental Protection Agency, etc. However, it is the supervisor's responsibility to ensure the quality and timeliness of the safety training.

General Training. It is imperative that all employees be provided safety training prior to an assignment and throughout the course of their employment.

Mandatory Training Requirements. There are numerous jobs that require training or certification prior to performing certain tasks. Supervisors are advised to check with appropriate safety officials if safety issues are not covered. Mandatory training must be documented and maintained in each individual's personal employee file.

The following table summarizes mandatory training requirements based on tasks that are further defined in this handbook. Consult with the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations for specifics and written authorization for substitution of classes and training to fulfill the training requirements.

TABLE 1

Working Task	Job Safety Requirements	Training Schedule
Regularly scheduled remote off road system work	Basic First Aid CPR Outdoor Survival (if necessary) Winter Survival (if necessary)	Every 3 years Every 3 years
Field Work	Bear Awareness	
Operating Motor Vehicles over 15,000 lb. gross vehicle weight	Motor vehicle operator	
Helicopter charter during regularly scheduled field work*	Learn To Return safety training Dunker (if regularly flying over water) Basic Aviation Safety	Every 3 years; annual refresher for Group A employees
Light airplane - Charter or Scheduled *	Outdoor Survival Winter Survival (if regularly flying during winter months) Dunker (if regularly flying over water) Basic Aviation Safety	Every 3 years; annual refresher for Group A employees
Operating Motorized Watercraft on Rivers and Lakes*	Lake and River Boat Operation River Boat Safety Motor Boat Operator Certification Course SF-182	Every 3 years
Operating Motorized Watercraft in Marine Environments*	Marine Environments Operation Marine Boating Safety	Every 3 years
Operating non motorized watercraft in rivers, lakes, and marine environments*	Appropriate watercraft certification	
Snow survey *	Snow Survey School	
Snowmobiles*	Winter Survival Snowmobile Safety Avalanche Awareness Emergency Survival	

Working Task	Job Safety Requirements	Training Schedule
ATV (off road vehicle)	ATV Safety	Refresher training if employee hasn't operated an ATV in 12 months
Use of firearms - shotguns*	Certification of compliance with 18 U.S.C. 922 (g) & (n) National Rifle Association shotgun safety and handling certification	Every 3 years; annual refresher using live ammunition
Hazardous materials	Certification of compliance with 29 CFR 1910.1200	
Operating chainsaws	Supervisor provided training	

* Task requires supervisor approval

INSPECTIONS AND ABATEMENTS

References

29 CFR 1960 Subpart D, Inspection and Abatement
29 CFR 1960 Subpart H, Training

Procedures

Routine Inspections. The routine inspection of all operations, work places, and facilities is a continuous part of every supervisor's responsibility.

Scheduled Inspections. Employees sufficiently trained to recognize unsafe or unhealthful working conditions and occupational hazards shall conduct scheduled inspections of work places and facilities. Scheduled inspections should be scheduled with management at the facility to be inspected. These inspections may be conducted as part of regular office reviews including Field Office Reviews.

Inspection Checklists. Inspection checklists are an excellent tool for conducting routine inspections. While checklists are helpful, they are not all encompassing. Hazards identified that are not included on checklists should be added as appropriate. (See Facilities Safety Inspection Checklist, Appendix A).

Supervisor Responsibility. Supervisors are responsible for corrective actions on an ongoing basis. Those corrective actions, which cannot be implemented immediately by the supervisor, will be referred to a higher level of management for corrective action.

FIRE SAFETY

References

29 CFR 1910.35-39 Means of Egress
29 CFR 1910.157-165 Portable Fire Suppression Equipment
29 CFR 1926.150-155 Fire Protection and Prevention
National Fire Codes
Uniform Building Codes
National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 101 Life Safety Code
Emergency Response Plan

Emergency Procedures and Evacuation Plans

Every NRCS business occupancy for employees or volunteers that is leased or owned must have a current Emergency Response Plan.

The plan shall address emergency and evacuation procedures for fire and other emergencies such as bomb threats, chemical spills, earthquakes, sabotage/ecotage, public demonstrations, and civil disobedience. The plan shall be updated annually. The plan shall include:

- 1.** building evacuation routes
- 2.** procedures to account for evacuated employees
- 3.** names of employees designated with special duties (rescue, medical, assistance to physically challenged)
- 4.** proper reporting procedures
- 5.** names and job titles of emergency procedures employees

JOB HAZARD REVIEW

References

None.

Procedures

A job hazard review is conducted to evaluate potential hazards related to any task. It is a way of planning and making sure that you are prepared to do the job or task safely. Job hazard review procedures include identification of tasks, potential hazards, and safe job practices and procedures. Employees and supervisors should work together during a job hazard review to assure that all characteristics of the job are addressed and the most efficient means of safety factors can be accomplished. A job hazard review is required to be completed for:

- 1.** job or work practices that have a potential hazard (to be decided together by the responsible employee and supervisor).
- 2.** new, non-routine, or hazardous tasks that are to be performed where potential hazards exist, especially in remote areas of Alaska
- 3.** jobs which may require an employee to use out-of-the-ordinary personal protective equipment, due to the type of work being done or the environmental conditions in which the work is being performed.

Responsibility

Supervisors shall discuss job hazards with employees prior to them beginning new projects, changing work sites, or beginning annual field projects. Supervisors shall ensure that job hazards are reviewed and discussed with each employee at least annually. A job hazard review will be conducted with seasonal field employees before they begin field work. This responsibility is to be noted in the state business plan as well as each supervisor's performance standards.

During the job hazard review, the supervisor and employee will jointly identify any hazards and discuss ways to reduce these hazards, including proper training and the use of protective equipment. It is the supervisor's responsibility to make employees aware of potential hazards, ensure that proper training is provided, and provide proper protective equipment, if necessary. Necessary training should be documented in the employee's Individual Development Plan and promptly scheduled to occur before the relevant work duties begin.

Conducting a Job Hazard Review

Identification of Tasks. Major tasks should be identified and discussed by the supervisor and employee annually.

Potential Hazards. Each major task is examined to identify potential hazards. Hazards may be associated with work practices or procedures, equipment, materials, or environment.

Safe Job Procedures. Safe job procedures to reduce or abate the hazards are identified. Necessary training, protective equipment, or alternative procedures will be identified and agreed on by the supervisor and employee.

Safety Standards. The policy and guidelines contained in the Alaska NRCS Safety Handbook are to be followed during the job hazard review. The immediate supervisor will ensure that NRCS policy and OSHA standards are integrated into the job hazard review, and that personal protective equipment and procedures are properly selected and meet the appropriate standards of the American National Safety Institute (ANSI).

GENERAL FIELD WORK AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

References

General Manual
American Red Cross
29 CFR 1910.151 Medical Services and First Aid
29 CFR 1910.1030 Blood Borne Pathogens
29 CFR 1910.141-142

Procedures

Agency activities sometimes require employees to travel and work in remote or hazardous areas. Employees are to work in remote or hazardous areas in pairs whenever possible, and always with established communications. Hazards must be assessed daily and specific steps must be taken to minimize, alleviate, or make as safe as possible any hazardous conditions.

Employee safety orientation is mandatory for field going employees. All employees with regularly scheduled work assignments in the field must have a current Red Cross certification for Basic First Aid before beginning fieldwork. Basic First Aid and CPR training must be renewed every three years.



Check-Out/Check-In System. The check-out/check-in system requires maintaining a record containing the itinerary, name of employee, work area, estimated time of return, and miscellaneous information such as other crew members, etc. This should be posted in plain site in each office where appropriate. In the event an employee does not return or contact the office at the prearranged designated times, search and rescue procedures shall be initiated. An office employee is to be designated to monitor posted return times and to notify appropriate authorities if problems arise. In those offices where no additional staff are available to monitor an employee's return, the employee shall provide their itinerary and estimated return time to their supervisor. The employee will establish a process with their supervisor to determine that they have returned safely, which may include enlisting family members or other agency employees to monitor return times and to notify the employee's supervisor if problems arise.

All field camps must have established communications in order to request assistance.

Safety Considerations

All employees working in remote areas must have and use appropriate personal protective equipment, as determined by the Job Hazard Review.

Employees working in remote areas must wear proper field attire. Proper field attire consists of long pants, long sleeved shirt, and appropriate footwear with non-slip soles and heels.

Employees traveling in back country situations will be skilled in the use of global positioning systems, map and compass, and aerial photographs.

Employees working in remote areas will maintain a level of fitness necessary to safely perform the duties outlined in their Position Description.

Vaccinations may be administered only if it can be clearly shown that conditions warrant preventive vaccinations, that the inoculations are necessary to protect employee health, and the employee's official duties exposes them to contact with poison or disease. Authorization for vaccination is to be obtained in advance, in writing, through the employee's supervisor and the Human Resources staff.

Hepatitis vaccinations shall be made available at NRCS expense to all employees who have the potential for occupational exposure to blood or other potentially infectious material. The vaccine should be administered within 10 working days of assignment. Employees must sign a form stating they are declining the vaccine if they choose not to be vaccinated. The employee may later choose to receive the vaccine at no cost.

Hepatitis A Virus is excreted or shed in feces. Direct contact with an infected person's feces or indirect fecal contamination of food, the water supply, raw shellfish, hands, and utensils may result in sufficient amounts of virus entering the mouth to cause infection (formerly called infectious hepatitis). Hepatitis B Virus is spread through sexual contact, blood transfusions, contaminated needles, contact with body fluids, or from mother-to-child at birth (formerly called serum hepatitis).

Remote Camp Safety

Gray Water. Gray water disposal pits shall be constructed so as to leach in 24 hours. Gray water disposal areas will be located at least 50 feet down gradient from any water source.

Potable Water. Potable water must be obtained from an approved potable or treated water source. Stored water must be kept pure and free from contamination through proper handling and storage procedures. All surface water sources must be filtered to prevent giardia and viruses. (Filtering of the hepatitis virus and other viruses require at least .1 micron size filters).

Toilet Facilities. Approved toilet facilities adequate for the capacity of the camp must be provided and must be located 200 feet from any water source.

Kitchen Tents. Kitchen tents should be kept clean and tidy with foodstuffs away from cleaning supplies. Two fire extinguishers should be present and ready.

Propane Tanks and Generators. Propane tanks must be properly anchored. Generators should be placed downwind with plywood noise control. Electrical panel boxes are to be protected from the weather. Fuel caches shall be well away from camp, and properly posted with No Smoking signs.

Camp Aviation Fuel Handling and Storage Procedures. When established, a camp fueling site must have the proper fuel containment. Both fuel bladders and barreled fuel must be kept in secondary containment (diked) in case of a fuel spill. The daily fuel log must be kept current. No Smoking signs must be posted and visible at any approach to the site. (No smoking within 50 feet of fueling site.) Fuel source must be grounded and bonded through machinery (filters, pumps, etc.) and then to aircraft. The site must be located a minimum of 100 feet from employee quarters and must be kept tidy with no loose articles allowed in the area that might be blown into helicopter rotors or aircraft propellers. Mechanical fuel pumps will be equipped with a remote switch. A windsock shall be properly installed.

First aid kits. Kits should be large enough to accommodate the number of people in camp.

Field units shall maintain current field emergency evacuation plans, which include the following pertinent information:

1. Field evacuation procedures;
2. Accident/incident reporting procedures and guidelines; and
3. Emergency telephone numbers.

Poisonous Plants

All field employees are to be aware of poisonous plants in the area and know how to identify them. Persons known to be highly sensitive to any particular poisonous plants or insects are to take extra precautions and should notify their supervisor prior to beginning field work.

Dangerous Animals

Employees shall be made aware of bears, moose, and other potentially dangerous animals that may be encountered, including identification, avoidance, and first aid techniques.

1. Bears. All regularly scheduled field employees working in areas frequented by bears will be required to take a Bear Awareness safety course.
2. Livestock and other dangerous domestic animals. Employees shall be made aware of proper behavior and the risks associated with large domestic animals.

3. Rabies. The rabies virus is an acute, often fatal, viral disease most commonly transmitted through the saliva of an infected mammal and, less commonly, by aerosols. Employees should avoid any wild animals that appear to have lost its fear of humans or is behaving abnormally. Abnormal and aggressive behavior in domestic animals is also a warning sign to exercise caution.

Use of Field and Communications Equipment

Field and communication equipment includes global positioning systems (GPS), satellite phones, cell phones, VHF and UHF radios, generators, compasses, and electric fuel pumps. Supervisors are to ensure that employees are familiar with and capable of properly operating such equipment.

SEARCH AND RESCUE

References

None

Procedures

Employees may provide emergency assistance to persons whose lives or safety are in danger. Such assistance must be fully coordinated with local agencies who have primary responsibility for emergency assistance. Employees do not replace existing search and rescue organizations but merely supplement those already in existence. Where search and rescue needs exist, NRCS managers may assist local authorities as deemed necessary after contacting and receiving permission from the State Conservationist.

Coordination with Other Organizations. Employees must, to the maximum extent feasible, cooperate and coordinate with local, State, and other federal agencies within their areas of responsibility. Examples of areas of cooperation: interagency radio communications, shared patrol responsibilities, cooperative search and rescue planning and implementation, cooperation with local law enforcement agencies, and cooperative management agreements.

Response to Search Requests. Whenever a request for a search is received, employees must relay the nature of the situation to their supervisor.

Search Procedures for Lost, Overdue, or Missing Employees. Determine whether a search needs to be implemented for the employee or employees. This can be done by:

1. Attempting contact with the missing individual(s) by radio or phone.
2. Checking with supervisor and co-workers as to their whereabouts.
3. Checking the compound, parking lots, and surrounding area for the missing person's private and work vehicle.

- 4.** Contacting by phone family and/or friends of the missing individuals for information as to their whereabouts. Phone numbers may be on record at the state office.
- 5.** Dispatching a NRCS employee or State Trooper to the employee's residence.

If contact with the missing employee cannot be made, then:

- 1.** notify your supervisor. The supervisor will notify the State Conservationist and State Administrative Officer (refer to the checklist below)
- 2.** notify the appropriate primary search and rescue agency
- 3.** notify the State Troopers

Once it has been determined that there is a lost, overdue, or missing employee or employees, it is necessary to gather additional information such as:

1. WHO?

- a) names
- b) number of persons missing
- c) descriptions of persons: gender, nationality, height, weight, hair color, eye color, attire

2. WHAT?

- a) missing person's schedule
- b) mode of transportation
- c) person's work assignment

3. WHEN?

- a) time person was last seen or contacted
- b) time person was to complete work assignment
- c) time person was to return to base

4. WHERE?

- a) determine the person's departure point
- b) determine travel routes and any stops

- c) determine person's scheduled destination

Once appropriate information has been gathered, provide the information to the primary search and rescue coordinator

Planning

As part of each NRCS offices emergency response plan, a lost, overdue, or missing employees plan will be developed. The purpose of the plan is to expedite emergency actions by various individuals to determine status, effect a rescue, facilitate medical treatment, and handle security measures involved in a successful survival mission.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

References

OSHA Standards, Subpart I Personal Protective Equipment
29 CFR 1910.132 General Requirements
29 CFR 1910.133 Eye and Face Protection
29 CFR 1910.134 Respiratory Protection
29 CFR 1910.135 Occupational Head Protection
29 CFR 1910.136 Occupational Foot Protection
29 CFR 1910.137 Electrical Protective Devices
29 CFR 1910.1030 Blood Borne Pathogens
29 CFR 1926 Subpart E, Personal Protective and Life Saving Equipment

Procedures

Field offices shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment. Refer to 29 CFR 1910.132 General Requirements for guidance.

Using the Job Hazard Review to Determine Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment. The Job Hazard Review process is used to identify hazards in a job task. Any personal protective equipment required will meet appropriate standards (American National Standards Institute, National Institute on Occupational Health and Safety, and Mine Safety and Health Administration).



Mandatory Use of Personal Protective Equipment. When specific personal protective equipment is found necessary and is purchased by NRCS, it is mandatory for the employee to use such equipment. Should an employee fail to do so, it is the supervisor's responsibility to take necessary steps to assure compliance. Failure to use appropriate personal protective equipment may result in disciplinary action.

Employees are expected to dress appropriately for field conditions. Appropriate foul-weather gear and footgear shall be carried for all fieldwork. Employees not dressed appropriately for the conditions are a hazard not only to themselves but also to all members of a crew.

Eye and Face Protection

Protective eye and face shields shall be required where there is a reasonable probability of injury that can be prevented by use of such equipment. Eye protection shall meet ANSI 287.1.

Head Protection

Protective headgear shall be required where there is a reasonable probability of injury, which could be prevented by use of such equipment. Head protection shall meet ANSI 289.1 standards.

Hard Hats. Hard hats must be worn when working in all construction activities or working in confined spaces. Hard hats must be worn if there is danger from falling or flying objects or in timber areas due to the danger of loose bark, limbs, or wind fall.

Nonconductive Hard Hats. Wear electrically insulated hard hats, if working near electrical conductors.

Proper Fit and Care. Adjust headband and hammock to fit snugly, with an air space of one-half inch or more between the head and top of crown of hat. Wear hard hat evenly centered to protect head properly. Clean and sterilize headband and hammock regularly. Integrity of head protection is essential. Thus, head protection shall be replaced when it becomes dented or damaged (some paints weaken integrity).

Hand Protection

Use of hand protection shall be required where there is a reasonable probability of injury, which could be prevented by use of such equipment. Appropriate hand protection will be provided for the task.

MOTORIZED VEHICLES AND EQUIPMENT SAFETY

References

General Manual
5 CFR 930 Subpart A Motor Vehicle Operators
49 CFR 383-395 Commercial Drivers License (CDL)

Procedures

When an employee's duties require operation of a motor vehicle for official business, whether NRCS owned, General Services Administration (GSA) fleet, commercially leased, or privately owned, the employee must hold a valid state driver's license in order to obtain authorization to operate a motor vehicle. While operating an NRCS owned, GSA fleet, or commercially leased or rented vehicle, an operator will have an NRCS USDA issued identification card as well as a valid driver's license in his or her possession at all times while driving on official business.

Driving Limitations

Rest Requirement. At least eight consecutive hours of rest, without duty, is required prior to each duty period requiring driving.

Other Limitations. Management may place further limitations on the above hours of duty and driving time due to fatigue or other safety factors.

Specialized Equipment. Employees operating any motor vehicle with a gross vehicle weight of 15,001 pounds or more, or specialized equipment, such as tractors, dump trucks, tracksters, boats, etc., shall be properly trained and licensed. Authorization to operate specialized equipment must be noted in the employee's file.

Supervisory Responsibility. Supervisors are responsible for ensuring that employees can satisfactorily operate the vehicle or equipment for which they are authorized. Supervisors have the authority to restrict or terminate authorizations of poor or unsafe drivers.

Poor/Unsafe Drivers. A driver whose known deficiencies make his/her driving unsafe must not drive on official business until those deficiencies are remedied, or his/her driving must be restricted to compensate for limiting factors. Any driver who has a poor accident record, is careless, uses poor judgment at the wheel, or has numerous driving violations may have their driving privileges suspended or revoked.

Equipment

Government owned or Government leased vehicles will be maintained in good mechanical condition.

Defective Vehicle. Vehicle defects identified by the operator during safety inspections shall be immediately reported to the supervisor. Routine maintenance and repairs are to be completed as needed. Defective vehicles shall be removed from service until repaired.

Disabled Vehicle. The operator may make appropriate emergency repairs to a vehicle or have it towed to a shop. If practical, a mechanic should make any repairs on a disabled vehicle.

Vehicle Inspections. Monthly vehicle inspections shall be performed by the vehicle operator or designated person. The inspection shall include checking vehicle lights (head, brake, tail, reverse and blinker lights), mirrors, wipers and washers, defroster, gauges, and brakes. Operators are responsible to ensure safety equipment (first aid kit, reflectors, jack/lug wrench) is in the vehicle.



Seat Belts. Seat belts must be available and used in NRCS motor vehicles (Reference Executive Order 12566 and Alaska State Law). Without exception, seat belts must be worn at all times by motor vehicle operators and passengers, regardless of the distance to be traveled or the time involved. If any employee fails to fasten his/her seat belt while riding in a vehicle on official business, he/she is subject to disciplinary action, as determined by management. All heavy, self-propelled equipment equipped with rollover protective structures must have a seat belt for the operator.

Safety/Survival Equipment. Every field vehicle shall be equipped with warning flags or reflectors, a tool kit, and a first aid kit. Additional road flares, and emergency equipment may be carried in each vehicle, as determined by local need.

Fire Extinguishers. All NRCS owned, or operated light trucks and sedans shall carry an approved fire extinguisher. Fire extinguishers must be appropriately mounted or secured and must be properly maintained and inspected annually.

Accident Reporting Kit. All NRCS owned or operated motor vehicles will carry a packet containing all accident report forms, and other information needed by the driver in case of an accident or other emergency. These packets will be GSA or NRCS Motor Vehicle Accident Reporting Kit. In case of accident, be familiar with "WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF ACCIDENT" material.

Winter Vehicle Travel

To minimize winter driving hazards, both the vehicle and the driver must be prepared in advance. Always drive at a speed that matches visibility, traffic, and road conditions. To see and be seen by others requires that the driver clean all loose snow and ice from the vehicle's hood, roof, trunk, lights, and windows. Lights and windows must be clear. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations when equipping vehicles with chains.

Operating motorized vehicles on frozen water bodies should be avoided unless it is a customary route and there is no reasonable alternate. The employee needs to insure that there is adequate ice thickness to proceed.

Vehicle Servicing and Repairs

Maintain and operate vehicles as recommended by the manufacturer. The use, care, maintenance, and inspection of vehicles should comply with the GSA and NRCS requirements contained in the loose-leaf book located in each vehicle.

Maintain a record of all repairs and inspections.

Replace tires (including spares) with a tread depth less than 2/32-inch, when the tread user bars indicate that the tire should be replaced, or when the tires are otherwise deemed unsafe or unusable.

Keep vehicle free of trash and loose items.

Have maintenance performed by a qualified mechanic. Always check items repaired before driving vehicle away from repair shop.

Comply with local laws on studded tire use.

Emergency equipment and tools carried in trucks shall be secured.

Secure anchor ballast in pickup trucks, if needed. Do not use rocks, boulders, or other loose items.

Use only approved safety cans for storage and transportation of gasoline and other flammable liquids. Metal cans carried in a pick-up bed with a plastic liner can become highly charged with static electricity. Grounding is to be done by placing the safety can on the ground or by using grounding devices.

Trailers Less Than 10,000 lbs. GVW

All drivers towing trailers must become familiar with towing and backing a trailer before driving on public roads. Installation of towing equipment (such as hitch balls or receiver hitches) must be approved in advance by the employee's supervisor. Vehicles towing trailers must comply with local, State and Interstate Commerce Commission regulations concerning size and weight of tow

vehicles. Tow vehicles must have sufficient brakes and be heavy enough to insure complete braking control for stopping and holding a trailer. Installation of an electric breakaway switch to apply trailer brakes automatically is required.

ATV trailers used around villages or in off-road conditions are excluded from the above trailer requirements.

Off-Road Vehicles and ATVs

Operation of off-road vehicles, such as all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) and snowmobiles, will require training in safe operating procedures and appropriate protective equipment (helmets, gloves, goggles, boots) as determined by task. Documentation of training will be maintained in the individual's personal employee file. Specific authorization for operation of off-road vehicles is required. The supervisor shall ensure that operators possess the skills required for the work project or activity. Three-wheeled ATV's shall not to be used by employees for official Government business.

All NRCS all-terrain vehicle operators in the state of Alaska will be trained by ATV instructors recognized by the Specialty Vehicle Institute of America (SVIA). Employees who have had certified training but have not operated an ATV in the past 12 months shall participate in refresher training prior to using all-terrain vehicles. A training video may be obtained to fulfill this requirement. (See Table 1).

NRCS shall provide:

- 1.** a manufacturer's operating manual
- 2.** a manufacturer's tool kit
- 3.** a proper fitting helmet which bares either the ANSI 290.1 or the Snell Memorial Foundation label
- 4.** goggles or a full-faceshield helmet for eye protection, which bares the standard markings VESC8, V-8, 287.1, or be constructed of polycarbonate

When performing field work, ATV operators should have with them:

- 1.** substantial shoes of a material such as leather that cover at least the ankle and have heels
- 2.** long pants to reduce the possibility of injury to feet, ankles and legs
- 3.** long-sleeved shirt or long-sleeved jacket to protect hands and arms

Snowmobiles

Supervisors must approve all projects or activities using snowmobiles and ensure that operators possess the skills required for the work, project, or activity.

Only qualified and authorized employees may operate snowmobiles.

Employees shall be trained in emergency survival and avalanche hazard recognition.

An itinerary shall be filed with the employee's supervisor and at the final destination when appropriate.

Use of snowmachines requires working in pairs with two snowmachines, unless working within easy walking distance of a well traveled road or occupied dwelling.

Personal Protective Equipment. Snowmobile operators in backcountry conditions are to have the safety equipment specified during Winter Survival Training or Snow Survey School. In addition, the following will be carried:

1. manufacturer's operating manual
2. snowmobile helmet (DOT, ANSI, or Snell approved)
3. clothing adequate for winter travel, including goggles, gloves, and boots
4. manufacturers tool kit
5. skis or snowshoes

WATERCRAFT OPERATIONS AND WATER SAFETY

References

46 CFR 24, 25, 26; 33 CFR Subchapter C, D, F, and S
41 CFR 114-38.5

General Water Safety for Passengers



All employees who are transported as passengers by watercraft while performing official business shall:

- 1.** wear a U.S. Coast Guard approved personal flotation device (PFD);
- 2.** assess the watercraft's capabilities and limitations and determine if the watercraft and operator are capable of performing travel in a safe manner;
- 3.** be familiar with the water classification system and the classification of waters they intend to navigate;
- 4.** not travel on waters higher than Class III; and
- 5.** carry appropriate survival equipment.

NRCS Operator Procedures for Motorized Watercraft

All NRCS-owned or leased watercraft and NRCS operators must meet the requirements established by the U.S. Coast Guard.

Only employees who have successfully completed the Motorboat Operator Certification Course, or a SF-182 are authorized to operate NRCS watercraft under 65 feet and under 300 tons.

Recertification shall be accomplished every three years and will require completing the basic watercraft training and a demonstration of appropriate qualifying skills.

Watercraft Personal Protection

All employees must wear an appropriate PFD or Mustang coat while in a watercraft. Watercraft, 16 feet or more in length, will also be equipped with at least one throwable (Type IV) PFD or throw bag.

The operator shall be responsible for regularly inspecting the PFD's and any flotation coveralls or immersion suits assigned to the watercraft. The operator shall be responsible for initiating any maintenance necessary to keep these items in serviceable condition.

The watercraft operator is responsible for safety practices on board NRCS watercraft.

Never wear hipboots or loose waders when working from boats in swift water or water over 3 feet deep. If use of waders is necessary, they should be made of neoprene and should fit snugly. If made of other material, have a belt secured around the outside of the waders and fitted firmly around waist.

Personal Protective Equipment

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for both power watercraft and paddle craft includes:

- 1.** U. S. Coast Guard approved, properly fitted PFD or Mustang coat and, when required, immersion suits
- 2.** first aid kit
- 3.** area maps and compass
- 4.** signaling device
- 5.** bailing device
- 6.** personal communications device
- 7.** 50-100 feet (15-30 m) of rope or throw bag

Additional personal protective equipment required for power watercraft includes:

- 1.** sound-producing signal device
- 2.** anchor and anchor line
- 3.** marine or river charts

4. emergency flare kit (pistol launched and hand-held parachute flares and meteors have many characteristics of a firearm and must be handled with caution)
5. carbon monoxide detectors for all watercraft with enclosed cabins
6. a GPS receiver

Additional PPE required for paddlecraft includes spare oars/paddles.

Additional PPE recommended for paddlecraft includes. Personal survival kit with items such as a knife, flares, fire starter, and a space blanket.

Emergencies

Employees assigned to watercraft must be trained in emergency procedures.

Plan your trip and regardless of its length, leave a float plan, itinerary, and return time with a responsible person.

Safety of Watercraft and Equipment

All NRCS watercraft must be maintained in first-class condition. All NRCS watercraft will be inspected annually.

All motorized and non-motorized boats, rafts, or other craft used by employees will be operated and maintained with safety as the prime consideration.

Check with local residents when operating in unfamiliar rivers and lakes for weather conditions or water conditions that may be unique to that area.

Get reliable weather reports.

AVIATION SAFETY

References

Federal Aviation Regulations

<http://www.OAS.gov>

Office of Aircraft Services Operational Procedures Memoranda

Interagency Helicopter Operations Guide (IHOG) NFES 1885

Hazardous Material Information

Field Reference Guide for Aviation Users

USDI Departmental Manual, Aviation Life Support Equipment Handbook, 351 DM 1

GM 360 Section 420.110

Interagency Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials Handbook-Guide

Use of Gratuitous Benefits from Nonfederal Sources http://policy.nrcs.usda.gov/scripts/lpsiis.dll/GM_120_401_a.htm

Scheduled Airline Transportation

For definitions of scheduled and special use, refer to: <http://www.OAS.gov> or call Office of Aircraft Services at (907) 271-3700.

Employees are not required to secure aircraft safety certification to fly on regularly scheduled jet airline transportation.

Employees are to use aircraft that are in compliance with 14 CFR 91.121 or 135.



All employees regularly flying on scheduled or chartered single or twin-engine propeller aircraft are required to complete Basic Aviation Safety training. Basic Aviation Safety training is to be followed up by refresher aviation training every 3 years. Those employees regularly flying during the winter months are required to have Winter Survival training.

Chartered Aircraft Transportation

Employees need written approval from the Assistant State Conservationist for Operations or MO leader to charter air service.

Employees using charter services paid for by NRCS for any part of their work are to contract with the Office of Aircraft Safety (OAS).

Employees will use OAS certified aircraft and OAS carded pilots.

Under special circumstances, an employee may use a non-OAS certified aircraft and pilot upon the approval of the State Conservationist. The employee must justify the request and document that the pilot and aircraft meet the Approval Requirements pursuant to GM-360 Amendment 46, January 1989, Part 420.113 a-e.

Employees may fly in other federal agency's OAS certified aircraft with an OAS carded pilot without special permission providing the other agency fulfills all OAS and NRCS safety requirements.



Non-employee passengers are permitted to accompany employees on flights for official business as necessary. Non-employee passengers are required to complete Appendix B Assumption of Risk prior to the flight. The form is to be filed with the local NRCS office.

The use of an employee's privately owned aircraft for official business must be approved by the State Conservationist.

General Procedures for Using All Chartered Aircraft

The pilot in command is responsible for the safe operation of the aircraft and the safety of passengers while on board. Pilots have the complete authority to postpone, change, or cancel flights when they believe existing or impending conditions make flying unsafe. Any passenger or individual in charge (Chief-Of-Party) can terminate a flight when they feel it is not being conducted safely. The responsibility for preventing accidents rests upon each individual involved in the flight, whether in the air, or on the ground. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), OAS, operator, pilot, ground crew, aviation personnel, and passengers all have a part in making the flight a safe and efficient trip.

OAS Pre-Flight Considerations. Pilots utilized by employees must be carded by OAS for the type of aircraft they are operating. The card must be carried by the pilot at all times and shall be available to employees for review prior to any flight.

All pilots and aircraft utilized by employees will be approved by OAS prior to use. Upon request by employees, the approval cards will be made available for review.

Employees are to review and comply with the OAS aircraft rental agreement (OAS 12) and all terms and conditions described therein as well as comply with all supplements. Special use

considerations are to be determined and requirements followed as defined in OAS regulations. Special use considerations are to be determined prior to flight.

It is OAS policy that OAS certified pilots provide a safety briefing each new day, just prior to boarding the aircraft.



Note:

The following sections are safety considerations that apply to OAS flights. Read these sections carefully.

Pre-Flight Considerations for All Chartered Aircraft. Flight Plans are required for all flights. The pilot normally performs this function, however, the Chief-of-Party must assure that flight plans are filed appropriately with FAA.

The Chief-of-Party will:

1. Brief the pilot on purpose, destination, and safety hazards of flight
2. Check the pilot's OAS approval card
3. Check the aircraft's OAS approval card
4. Ensure pilot presents a safety briefing

Employees are encouraged to use the supplemental Preflight Pilot Check Form if they have any questions or concerns about the aircraft or pilot's background.

During project work, employees must wear or have available, clothing and equipment suitable for emergency survival situations.

All firearms to be transported aboard the aircraft will be checked to assure the chamber is clear. Ammunition will be accounted for and always maintained under watch or in a secure location.

Employees are prohibited from riding in single engine aircraft in IFR conditions and at night.

Determine if the mission is necessary. The "go-no-go" decision is very important. Employee safety is the primary concern when planning aviation activities. The decision for "go-no-go" lies solely with the Chief-of-Party.

Transportation of hazardous materials or waste is strictly controlled. Refer to the interagency handbook addressing transportation of hazardous materials before attempting transport.

Where and when possible, all flights will be flight followed on quarter hour increments. Flight following procedures will be established prior to flight. Additionally a copy of the flight plan, including flight route, will be left with a responsible individual at either the base camp, Flight Services, or aircraft charter service.

In-flight Precautions. All cargo or baggage carried in the cabin of the aircraft must be firmly secured by seat belts, rope, or cargo net, and shall not obstruct access to any exit. Any deviation from this must be approved by the pilot or Chief-of-Party.

Pepper spray is not to be carried inside the aircraft. Discuss transportation of pepper spray, firearms, and ammunition with the pilot in advance of the flight.

Post-Flight Charter Considerations. Chief-of-Party shall coordinate with the pilot to ensure that the flight plan is closed out with FAA. The pilot will normally close the flight plan, but passengers are also responsible to let the proper authorities know of their arrival.

Whenever the aircraft is left unguarded, even if it is locked, NRCS firearms and ammunition will be removed and secured with an employee.

Aviation Training and Safety Certification Requirements

Employees are subject to safety training as outlined in Table 1.

Supervisors are responsible to evaluate their individual programs and identify unique training needs for employees engaged in aviation activities. Employees will be classified according to aviation safety training needs as defined below.

Employees utilizing aircraft for transportation for any part of any type of field survey to collect information, or who use aircraft below 800-feet for reconnaissance flights, or make landings on unimproved airstrips, unimproved areas supporting native vegetation, snow, glaciers, gravel bars or rocky areas, mountain ridges or beaches is termed "special use."

Employees involved with "special use" will be classified as Group A employees. Group A employees are required to complete the Basic Aviation Safety training followed by refresher training every three years, as well as other classes as appropriate. Refer to Table 1.

Employees or clients visiting field operations in a management role for review or supervision and who are involved with "special use" for less than 2 days in succession, will be classified Group B. As a minimum, Group B classified employees are to be accompanied by at least one Group A employee who is certified in Basic Aviation Safety. As another option, Group B classified employees may also elect to acquire certification in Basic Aviation Safety. At a minimum, Group B employees are required to:

- 1.** be familiar with entry and exit procedures
- 2.** know how the seatbelt/shoulder harness operates
- 3.** be knowledgeable of location and operation of Emergency Locator Transmitter (ELT)
- 4.** be familiar with use of survival equipment

5. possess appropriate PPE and aviation survival equipment as appropriate and know how they are to be used

Group A employees are required to complete OAS Basic Aircraft Safety training and receive certification. The instructor for this course must be OAS qualified.

All Group A employees will receive a half hour annual formal refresher prior to the next field season. This requirement can be acquired by viewing a half hour video, plus a half hour informal review of appropriate material. The formal OAS Aircraft Safety Refresher course may also fulfill this requirement.

Every three years a 4 to 8 hour refresher aviation safety class will be required for all Group A employees. Training is to be given by an OAS certified trainer. This training will, at a minimum, include:

5. safety around the aircraft;
6. aircraft capabilities and limitations;
7. personal protective equipment and aviation survival equipment;
8. Aviation Mishap Information System; and
9. aircraft accident analysis.

Employees are to retain all copies of certification in their personal files.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for All Chartered Flights

All crew members and passengers shall wear the following PPE for all helicopter chartered flights:

1. aviator's protective helmet (SPH-4 or SPH-5)
2. fire-resistant clothing (Nomex), Type 4
3. leather boots when possible
4. all leather or leather and Nomex gloves

All crew members and passengers shall wear the following PPE for all helicopter and fixed wing chartered flights:

1. hearing protection and a survival pack that is appropriate for surviving in the area
2. appropriate field clothing for the area, weather, and climate conditions (garments or undergarments made of synthetic or other materials with low temperature

melting characteristics, such as nylon, dacron, or polyester, shall not be worn beneath the authorized flight clothing)

Aircraft Accident/Incident Procedures

An aviation mishap involves property damage or injury. In case of a mishap, contact the State Administrative Officer, your supervisor, and the State Safety Officer immediately.

If an OAS aircraft is involved in a mishap, also call the 24-hour hotline number at 1-888-464-7427. OAS aircraft mishaps are classified as Aircraft Accidents or Aircraft Incidents and require the appropriate action.

Aircraft Accident. An accident is defined as an unplanned event that does substantial damage or causes serious injury or death when associated with the operation of the aircraft. Form OAS-34A, Aviation Mishap Information System, is to be completed and submitted.

Aircraft Incident. An incident is an unplanned event that results in the deviation from standard operating procedures, which has the potential of resulting in an accident. Form OAS-34, Aviation Mishap Information System is a Department of the Interior system of reporting any observed condition or act that affects, or may affect the same operation of contractor, charter, or rental aircraft, associated equipment or facilities.

The forms listed can be obtained through OAS.

FIREARMS SAFETY

References

Federal, State and Local Laws

Procedures

Authorized Employees. Possession or receipt of NRCS firearms or ammunition is restricted to those individuals certified to be in compliance with 18 U.S.C. 922 (g) & (n).



Federal gun control laws specifically prohibit the possession of firearms or ammunition by employees:

1. subject to a court order prohibiting harassing, stalking, or threatening of an intimate partner or a child of an intimate partner; or
2. convicted of a misdemeanor crime of domestic violence.

Certification of compliance with 18 U.S.C. 922 (g) & (n) shall be documented prior to scheduling firearm proficiency testing or issuance of NRCS firearms or ammunition. A certification statement must be completed and submitted to the State Administrative Officer for review and concurrence. The State Administrative Officer shall advise the State Conservationist in writing of the names of those individuals approved for consideration of assignment of firearms or ammunition. The completed certification statements shall be retained in secure human resources records. Employees, including full-time, part-time, volunteer, and others, shall certify annually that they have not been convicted of any felonies or misdemeanor crimes of domestic violence since their last certification. Employees found to be providing false information on certifications or employment applications will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including immediate removal.

Certification of compliance with 18 U.S.C. 922 (g) & (n) is a condition of employment for those field-going positions that may require possession of firearms or ammunition for protection from

wild animals. This requirement will be described in position descriptions and vacancy announcements.

Proficiency. Authorized employees that need to carry firearms are required to demonstrate proficiency by certification as noted in Table 1.

Administration. The State Conservationist will appoint a State Shotgun Coordinator. The State Shotgun Coordinator will be responsible for ongoing maintenance, technical advice, coordination, inventory, storage, and inspection of all NRCS shotguns and related equipment.

The State Shotgun Coordinator will maintain a current list of all authorized employees who are qualified to handle shotguns. The training records will be maintained by the coordinator and as part of the safety committee's records.

The State Shotgun Coordinator shall be notified by employees who are assigned shotguns when repairs to the shotguns are needed. Authorized employees may use a local authorize/certified gunsmith to make repairs to shotguns or work with the State Shotgun Coordinator to make arrangements for repairs. A copy of all repairs shall be submitted to the State Shotgun Coordinator and a record of these repairs will be maintained in the shotgun coordinator's file.

The shotgun coordinator will insure all shotguns are inspected annually by a certified/authorized gunsmith. Supplies, including ammunition, may be purchased as needed at NRCS contract vendors only by certified NRCS employees. The Shotgun Coordinator will initiate any necessary action for repairs, cleaning, replacement, etc. at the end of every field season or when necessary. All shotguns used during the field season shall be cleaned and inspected regularly by the employee.

Only NRCS shotguns shall be authorized to be carried on official NRCS business. No other firearms, including personal weapons, are to be used. Shotguns shall only be used during training, in a survival situation, or in the defense of life or property during confrontation with a dangerous animal. Use will be in strict adherence to all local, state, and federal laws.

Overall accountability for all shotguns will be the responsibility of the Shotgun Coordinator.

Employees will be responsible for each shotgun assigned to them. Employees are responsible for the proper use and protection of any government owned firearms and ammunition under the employee's custody or control. Employees may be held financially liable for losses to the government caused by their negligence or misconduct. Employees shall not allow or permit government owned firearms or ammunition to be used for purposes other than NRCS official business.

The Shotgun Coordinator will assign shotguns or ammunition only to authorized shotgun proficient, currently certified individuals. Shotguns and accessories shall be issued to qualified employees on a property slip (Form number AD-732 (3-77)). The individual accepting the transfer accepts the responsibility of control, care, cleaning, proper use and safety, and shall be held personally accountable for the shotgun and ammunition.

An employee assigned a shotgun will inspect it for proper condition prior to accepting the shotgun. Employees may have the shotgun inspected by a certified/authorized gunsmith prior to

accepting the shotgun. All shotgun problems and concerns shall be reported to the Shotgun Coordinator for immediate corrective action.

All transfers of shotguns and support equipment will be documented. Documentation will be maintained by the Shotgun Coordinator.

All assignments of shotguns or ammunition to other than permanent Alaska NRCS employees shall terminate when the period of employment or detail ends. Subsequent rehire or new detail requires new approval and certification.

Only the State Conservationist is authorized to approve disposal of government owned firearms or ammunition. Disposal shall be in accordance with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Equipment

NRCS will only issue 12-gauge pump action shotguns. They are issued only for training purposes and for appropriate protection of life or property in case of attack by a dangerous animal. No other firearms, including personal firearms, are authorized. Repairs to government owned firearms must be authorized by the Shotgun Coordinator.

Shotguns may be equipped with either rifle style sights or a bead sight.

The only ammunition authorized during field activities shall be factory 1-1/4 oz. 2-3/4 inch solid slug loads or a mixture of alternating slugs and 00 buckshot. Alternative ammunition may be used during training sessions upon the recommendation of the trainer. All ammunition will be obtained through the State Shotgun Coordinator or by a certified instructor during training courses. Federal law prohibits transportation, carrying, or using privately owned firearms while on federally owned and leased property. Violators are subject to disciplinary action, up to and including removal or prosecution under the law.



Firearm Certification. Only specifically authorized NRCS employees, volunteers, or other personnel may possess firearms or ammunition during official duty or while performing official travel. These individuals shall be required to complete a firearm certification program before being assigned a shotgun or ammunition for use in the field and shall be recertified every three years. For the two seasons between recertification, employees will only be required to attend that portion of firearm training involving firing live ammunition as described below. Alternate locations for firearm certification are available through Regional Safety Coordinators. Such a course must consist of at least four hours of classroom time culminating in a prescribed shooting regimen at a firing range. The instructor administering the firing range component will be a certified Federal Law Enforcement Training Center graduate, Federal Bureau of Investigation Officer, or a certified National Rifle Association Instructor.

Contents of Classroom Component of Firearms Certification Course. The classroom component of the firearm certification course shall consist of the following subject matters:

1. animal behavior (moose, bear, bison, musk ox, and cattle)

2. basic firearm safety review
3. legal and moral aspects of firearms use
4. alternative forms of protection and defense

Shooting Proficiency Component. This portion of the Firearms Certification Course will take place on the firing range under the control of an authorized instructor.

Qualifications. The following qualification procedures will be used unless the certified instructor recommends a suitable alternative procedure for a specific training or certification session. The recommendation of the certified instructor will take precedence.

The target for animal protection will be 8 1/2" by 11" in size and will be placed a distance of 15 yards from the firing line.

The NRCS Shotgun Coordinator will supply pump shotguns to the class instructor for individuals not previously certified; however previously certified individuals may receive a shotgun directly from the Shotgun Coordinator. The Shotgun Coordinator shall also provide adequate hearing protection and ammunition as appropriate.

Shotgun Certification requires individuals to fire two complete sequences of fire. A sequence consists of the following:

1. On command to fire from the firearm instructor, the individual will start with an empty chamber, the slide action closed and locked with the trigger safety on, and load a round into the chamber from a full magazine (4 rounds, all slugs).
2. The shotgun will be shouldered, aligned with target, safety switched to fire position and the round will be fired. Three more rounds from the magazine will be fired in rapid succession at the target. The four shots will be fired within a five second period.
3. Upon completion of firing, one additional round will be loaded directly into the chamber and fired at the target within a four second period. After firing, the safety will be moved to the safe position, the shell will be ejected from the chamber, and the action will be left in the back position with the chamber open.
4. Certification will require that 70% of the shots be on the target and that all sequences of shots be fired within the allowable time of ten seconds for one sequence.
5. Certification will also require the shooter to demonstrate proper safe handling of the firearm.

Use of Firearms

Employees must observe all Federal, State, and Local laws in regard to the licensing, use, and transportation of firearms and ammunition. Employees are prohibited at all times from using government owned vehicles or equipment for the express or incidental purpose of hunting, shooting, or transporting of game, hunters, personal firearms, or personal ammunition. Violators are subject to disciplinary action and prosecution under the law.

Firearms in Camp. Shotguns shall only be used in camp areas or during working hours by certified employees in a survival situation or in the defense of life or property during confrontation with a dangerous animal.

Taking Game in Defense of Life or Property. As a job requirement, firearms shall be carried in work areas and used if necessary for the protection of work parties from dangerous animals. The necessity of taking game animals must not be brought about by harassment or provocation of the animal or the unreasonable invasion of the animal's habitat.

Game animals taken may become property of the state. Different parts of the animal may have to be provided to the state for administrative reasons. This may have to be done in required timeframes. A copy of all reports provided to the state shall be provided to the State Conservationist within 15 days of the incident. Employees are to check local regulations prior to transporting and using a firearm.

Weapons Discharge or Loss of Ammunition. The discharge of a firearm other than for approved practices, or the loss of ammunition, requires a written report to the State Conservationist within 24 hours of the incident. A copy is to be provided at the same time to the State Shotgun Coordinator. The Shotgun Coordinator and State Conservationist shall be notified **immediately** of all instances of lost, missing, or stolen government owned firearms and ammunition.

Transportation and Storage of Firearms and Ammunition

When not in active use, all firearms and ammunition shall be stored in a secure place under lock and key. Both the chamber and the magazine of a firearm shall be unloaded prior to storage. The action shall be open (bolt to rear) and trigger locks shall be placed on the trigger guard at all times the shotgun is not in use. This includes during transportation to the field site. Trigger lock keys are to be stored in a second location. When appropriate, shotguns will be transported in a protective locked hard case.

Shotguns will be examined whenever they are handled to assure that they do not contain live rounds of ammunition.

Shotguns will not be carried in the field with a live round in the chamber. The exception to this will be when the threat of an animal attack is eminent.

Shotguns carried in the field while operating or occupying any mode of transportation equipment (ATV, snowmobile, boat, plane, etc.) shall not be loaded.

Shotguns will not be left unattended or stored, even temporarily, in unsecured areas. Access to the shotgun storage locker shall be restricted to authorized designated individuals.

Prior to storage, shotguns shall be cleaned, lightly oiled, serviceable, and unloaded. Shotguns shall be serviced by an authorized/certified gunsmith.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH HAZARDS/INDUSTRIAL HYGIENE

References

29 CFR 1910.1200 Hazard Communication Standard
29CFR 1910.106

Hazard Communication Program

The Hazard Communication Program (Employees Right-to-Know) encompasses handling and storage of hazardous materials (products) in the workplace. The Hazard Communication Program does not apply to hazardous waste, tobacco or tobacco products, wood or wood products, food, drugs, cosmetics, alcoholic beverages, or products or substances used in the workplace in the same manner as household use.

Manufacturer's Instructions. Manufacturer's instructions for the safe handling and storage of hazardous materials should be followed.

Hazard Determination. The manufacturer, supplier, or employer must evaluate chemicals to determine the hazards. Normally, this evaluation is done by the manufacturer and provided via Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

Material Safety Data Sheet. The MSDS sheet, if provided by a vendor, product manufacturer, or distributor, will be kept on file in the work place. Employees will review the MSDS sheet before use or exposure to hazardous materials. Consult the product MSDS for information regarding:

1. physical and chemical characteristics (flashpoint, vapor pressure)
2. physical hazards (fire, explosion, and reactivity)

3. health hazards
4. primary routes of entry
5. permissible Exposure Limit or Threshold Limit Value
6. carcinogenicity
7. safe handling procedures
8. control measures (engineering controls, work practices, personal protective equipment)
9. emergency and first aid procedures

Employee Training. Supervisors shall ensure that employees using hazardous materials have been trained as mandated in 29 CFR 1910.1200 Hazard Communication Standard.

Hazard Communication Plan (HazCom Plan). Each facility storing hazardous material is required to have a written HazCom Plan. That plan includes information on:

1. site specific policy
2. non-routine tasks
3. employee information
4. informing contractor employees
5. inventory of hazardous materials
6. waste minimization

Waste Minimization. It is essential that employees, supervisors, and managers include waste minimization practices into procurement, use, and disposal of hazardous substances. Waste minimization will be promoted by:

1. substituting less hazardous products when feasible
2. reducing to a minimum the number of different products used
3. purchasing only amounts absolutely needed
4. management of materials during receiving, storage, and handling to reduce damage and loss
5. Separating incompatible products during handling and storage
6. planning work to reduce leftover products and materials

Labeling. All products must be properly labeled to include:

- 1.** Contents
- 2.** Appropriate Warning
- 3.** Name and Address of Manufacturer

Note

Pesticides are excepted from the HazCom labeling requirements.

HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

References

OSHA Standards

29 CFR Subpart H Hazardous Materials

29 CFR 1910.101 Compressed Gases (General Requirements)

29 CFR 1910.102 Acetylene

29 CFR 1910.103 Hydrogen

29 CFR 1910.104 Oxygen

29 CFR 1910.105 Nitrous Oxide

29 CFR 1910.106 Flammable and Combustible Liquids

29 CFR 1910.107 Spray Finishing Using Flammable and Combustible Liquids

29 CFR 1910.108 Dip Tanks Containing Flammable or Combustible Liquids

29 CFR 1910.109 Explosives and Blasting Agents

29 CFR 1910.110 Storage and Handling of Liquefied Petroleum Gases

29 CFR 1910.111 Storage and Handling of Anhydrous Ammonia

Hazard Communication - A Program Guide for Federal Agencies

Interagency Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials Handbook-Guide.

Use and Storage of Hazardous Materials

All hazardous materials will be identified and stored according to manufacturer recommendations.

All employees using hazardous materials will follow the manufacturer's recommendations.

All employees will use manufacturer recommended PPE when handling hazardous materials. Refer to Hazard Communication--A Program for Federal Agencies; Interagency Aviation Transport of Hazardous Materials.

Flammable and Combustible Liquids

Flammable liquids (Class I) are those that give off flammable or explosive vapors at or below 100° F (37.8° C.) and include:

Gasoline	49°
Acetone	0°
Lacquer	0° to 80°
Shellac	40°
Ether	45°
Alcohol	52° to 91°
Varnish	80° or less
Turpentine	95°

Combustible liquids (Class II) have flashpoints above 100° F. and below 200° F., and include:

Diesel Fuel	100°
Kerosene	150°+
Stoddard Solvent	100°+
Penetrating Oil	100°+

Class III Liquids are those combustible liquids with flashpoints at or above 140° F, such as creosote oil which is 165° F.

All NRCS offices will have on file Hazard Communication--A Program Guide for Federal Agencies.

MACHINES AND TOOLS

References

29 CFR 1910.211 Definitions
29 CFR 1910.212 General Requirements
29 CFR 1910.241 Definitions
29 CFR 1910.242 Hand and Portable Powered Tools Equipment - General
29 CFR 1910.243 Guarding of Portable Power Tools
29 CFR 1910.244 Other Portable Tools and Equipment
29 CFR 1926.300 General Requirements
29 CFR 1926.301 Hand Tools
29 CFR 1926.302 Power-Operated Hand Tools
29 CFR 1926.304 Woodworking Tools
29 CFR 1926.305 Jacks
29 CFR 1926.351 Arc Welding and Cutting
29 CFR 1926.352 Fire Prevention
29 CFR 1926.353 Ventilation and Protection
29 CFR 1910.268 Telecommunications

Procedures

Machines and tools shall be properly maintained, operated, stored, and inspected.

Portable Hand Tools

Chopping and Chipping Tools. Use the right tool for the job. Keep tools well sharpened with splinter-free handles and tight heads. Protect eyes from flying particles.

Chainsaws. Follow manufacturer's operating and safety instructions. Supervisors will provide training for chainsaw operators. Required personal protective equipment for chainsaws are chaps, gloves, and ear, eye, head, and foot protection.

Portable Electric Tools

Inspect and test all power tools regularly and maintain them in good condition. All electric tools must be three-wire grounded, double-insulated, or fault-interrupter protected.

Do not operate portable electric tools where flammable vapors or gases are present or in wet areas.

All portable electric circular saws must have automatic guards that completely cover the cutting edges when the saw is not in use. Do not use cracked, bent, dull, or damaged blades.

Radio and Telemetry Equipment

AC powered radio equipment must be stored in locked cabinets and keys must be available only to radio technicians or employees specially instructed and authorized to use the equipment.

Never use any radio or extend any antenna on a portable set if a lightning storm is within one mile.

Do not use a radio transmitter within 300 feet of any electric blasting or any area where electric detonators are handled or stored.

Provide whip antennas with safety knobs, closed loops, or other protective devices to prevent injury when not extended.

Only those qualified and trained may climb high structures. Wear appropriate PPE (safety belt, harness, etc.) when climbing high structures. Do not work on energized antennas.

EMPLOYEE REPORTS OF UNSAFE/UNHEALTHFUL WORKING CONDITIONS

References

29 CFR 1960.26-28 Inspection and Abatement
Public Law 91-596, Section 8 (f)(1)
29 CFR 1960.46 Agency Responsibility
29 CFR 1960.8(a) General Duty Clause

Procedures

Employees are responsible for identifying potentially hazardous conditions and correcting them when they have the ability and knowledge to do so.

Supervisor Responsibilities. Supervisors are the key to ensuring that follow up is made on employee reports of unsafe conditions. Supervisors to whom reports are made are responsible for investigating employee reports and implementing controls to protect employees from the hazard. Such controls may be to:

1. discontinue the operation or process until corrective action is completed
2. remove all employees from the hazardous condition, operation, or process
3. place barriers and sign the hazardous area to prevent employee entry until corrective actions are completed
4. advise employees concerning completed or planned corrective actions
5. forward the report to their Regional Safety Coordinator or higher authority if the supervisor does not have the expertise, authority, or resources to accomplish corrective action

6. follow up to ensure corrective actions have been taken

Safety Officer Responsibilities. The State Safety Officer and the appropriate Regional Safety Coordinator are responsible for providing technical assistance to supervisors and upper level management for proper identification of hazards and appropriate corrective actions.

Supervisor Responsibilities. Supervisors and their staff are responsible for implementing and supporting the reporting process by:

1. training employees in proper reporting of unsafe or unhealthful working conditions
2. providing supervisors the resources to ensure that employees are protected from the potential hazard(s) reported
3. ensuring that no employee is subjected to restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal by virtue of their submitting a report either orally or formally within the organization or to higher levels of authority

Employee Right

The employee has the right to decline a task because of a reasonable belief that there is an imminent risk of death or serious injury and there is insufficient time for hazard reporting and abatement actions. See 29 CFR 1960.46. Employees have the right to make reports and to remain anonymous without fear of reprisal.

Workplace Violence

NRCS offices shall implement a zero tolerance policy for workplace violence. The policy shall be disseminated to all employees. Procedures for reporting workplace violence shall be established, and employees will be notified on the proper reporting procedure.

Employees should receive training on prevention of workplace violence and proper reporting procedures. Employees who have potential exposure to conflict in the performance of duties shall receive training in conflict resolution or equivalent.

All employees have the responsibility to report all acts of workplace violence promptly to supervisors and managers and, in case of an emergency, directly to law enforcement officials.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLAN

References

Natural Resources Conservation Service Emergency Response Plan
Occupant Emergency Plan

Emergency Response Plan

All NRCS funded building space and employees will be covered by an Emergency Response Plan.

Each NRCS office will post a copy of the Emergency Response Plan in a visible location in each office.

The Emergency Response Plan will be reviewed with employees by the Building Safety Committee Chairperson on a biannual basis.

Electronic copies of Emergency Response Plans are to be maintained by each office and updated as appropriate. Copies will be provided electronically to the Alaska Safety Officer, State Administrative Officer, and Lead Contract Specialist.

APPENDIX A

Facilities Safety Inspection Checklists—General

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- () () 1. Is the required OSHA workplace poster prominently displayed?
- () () 2. Has the State Office demonstrated an active interest in safety and health matters by defining a policy for the workplace and communicating it to all employees?
- () () 3. Are the required forms, Report of Accident/Incident, prepared for all employee and visitor accidents/incidents and promptly forwarded to the safety manager?
- () () 4. Has the State Safety Officer received the required training?
- () () 5. Is there an active State Safety Committee or group that allows and encourages participation of employees in safety and health activities?
- () () 6. Does the State Safety Committee meet regularly and prepare written reports of its activities? Are copies of the minutes promptly sent to the NRCS Management Team?
- () () 7. Is there an established procedure for handling employee concerns regarding safety and health issues without fear of reprisal?
- () () 8. Are workplace Emergency Response Plans current? Do they cover all types of natural disasters that might be anticipated to affect the workplace?
- () () 9. Are emergency telephone numbers posted where they can be easily seen in the event of an emergency?
- () () 10. Are the workplace emergency plans readily available for quick reference during working hours?
- () () 11. Are the workplace emergency plans readily available for quick reference before and after working hours and on weekends? Are appropriate after hours telephone numbers included in the emergency plans?
- () () 12. Does the workplace emergency plans list the name and extension of employees currently certified in CPR and First Aid?

ACTION
OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 13. Have copies of the current emergency workplace plans been sent to the State Safety Officer?
- ☐ ☐ 14. Do the employees have valid State driver licenses?
- ☐ ☐ 15. Have all light fixed wing and helicopter aircraft users met the aircraft standards outlined in Section 5 of the NRCS Alaska Safety Handbook. Has the training been documented?
- ☐ ☐ 16. Have all employees that operate all terrain vehicles or snowmachines been properly trained in the operation of such vehicles? Has the training been documented?
- ☐ ☐ 17. Have appropriate employees been trained in CPR and First Aid? Has the training been documented?
- ☐ ☐ 18. Has other appropriate safety and health training been provided for appropriate employees? Has such training been documented?

Exits and Access—29 CFR 1910.35

ACTION
OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. Are all exits visible and unobstructed?
- ☐ ☐ 2. Are all exits marked with a readily visible sign that is properly illuminated?
- ☐ ☐ 3. Are there sufficient exits to ensure prompt escape in cases of emergency?
- ☐ ☐ 4. Are adequate controls established and posted for areas requiring limited occupancy?
- ☐ ☐ 5. Is the exterior egress from the emergency exit to designated safe areas smooth, solid, and substantially level?
- ☐ ☐ 6. Are special precautions taken to provide employees with adequate exits during construction and rehabilitation work?
- ☐ ☐ 7. Are latches or other fastening devices on exit doors provided with a panic bar for easy exit?

Fire Protection—29 CFR 1910.155

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. Are portable fire extinguishers provided in adequate number and type? (Total travel distance does not exceed 75 feet for a Class A fire or 50 feet for a Class B fire).
- ☐ ☐ 2. Are fire extinguishers serviced annually and such service properly noted on the inspection tag?
- ☐ ☐ 3. Are fire extinguishers mounted in readily accessible locations?
- ☐ ☐ 4. Are fire extinguisher locations marked with a readily visible sign?
- ☐ ☐ 5. Are fire extinguishers inspected monthly for general condition and operability? Is the monthly inspection recorded on a tag attached to the extinguisher?
- ☐ ☐ 6. Is the fire alarm system tested at least once a year?
- ☐ ☐ 7. Are evacuation drills conducted at least once a year?
- ☐ ☐ 8. Are employees periodically instructed in use of extinguishers and fire protection procedures?
- ☐ ☐ 9. Is the Emergency Evacuation plan current and posted throughout the building?
- ☐ ☐ 10. Are any interior stand pipes and valves inspected regularly?
- ☐ ☐ 11. Are fire doors and shutters in good operating condition? Are fusible links in place, unobstructed, and protected from obstruction?
- ☐ ☐ 12. Is the local fire department well acquainted with the facilities and any specific hazards?

Housekeeping and General Work Environment—29 CFR 1910.141

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. Are halls, passageways, storerooms, and service rooms kept in a clean, orderly and sanitary condition?
- ☐ ☐ 2. Is the general work area free from clutter and excess accumulation of paper or other debris?

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 3. Are food products not kept in the same refrigerator as batteries, film, chemicals, or other non-food products?
- ☐ ☐ 4. Are rubbish and litter disposed of daily?
- ☐ ☐ 5. Are there tripping hazards in halls, walkways, or work areas?
- ☐ ☐ 6. Are carpets well secured to the floor and free of worn or frayed seams?
- ☐ ☐ 7. Is smoking not permitted in the building?
- ☐ ☐ 8. Do the toilet facilities meet the requirements of applicable sanitary codes?
- ☐ ☐ 9. Are adequate washing facilities provided?
- ☐ ☐ 10. Are all areas of the facility adequately illuminated?
- ☐ ☐ 11. Are the building ventilation systems regularly checked for their performance and balanced when necessary?
- ☐ ☐ 12. Are stairways in good condition with standard risers provided for every flight having four or more risers? Are non-slip treads provided?
- ☐ ☐ 13. Have weeds or other combustible material been removed from within 20 feet of any building?
- ☐ ☐ 14. Are portable ladders adequate for their purpose, in good condition, and provided with secure footing?
- ☐ ☐ 15. Are fixed ladders adequate, in good condition, and equipped with side rails or cages or special climbing devices, if required?
- ☐ ☐ 16. Are all areas below 7 feet in height free from nails, hooks, screws, and any other sharp protruding object.

Medical and First Aid—29 CFR 1910.151

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. If a hospital or medical clinic is not located near your facility, is one or more employee trained in first aid?
- ☐ ☐ 2. Are the first aid supplies adequate for the type of potential injuries in the workplace?

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 3. Are there quick water flush facilities available where employees are exposed to corrosive materials?

Flammable Liquids—29 CFR 1910.106

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. Are approved safety cans or other acceptable containers used for handling and dispensing flammable liquids?
- ☐ ☐ 2. Are contents of safety cans or other acceptable containers clearly marked in large letters on the outside of the container?
- ☐ ☐ 3. Are all flammable liquids that are kept inside buildings stored in proper storage containers and placed in approved flammable storage cabinets?
- ☐ ☐ 4. Are NO SMOKING signs posted and smoking regulations strictly enforced in areas used for storage of flammable liquids?

Personal Protective Equipment—29 CFR 1910.132

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. Are hard hats provided and worn where any danger of falling objects exists?
- ☐ ☐ 2. Are protective goggles or glasses provided and worn where there is any danger of flying particles or splashing of corrosive materials?
- ☐ ☐ 3. Is all protective equipment maintained in a sanitary condition and readily available for use?
- ☐ ☐ 4. Are noise protection devices available?

Hazard Communication—29 CFR 1910.1200

ACTION

OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 1. Is a written Hazard Communication Plan on file?

ACTION
OK NEEDED

- ☐ ☐ 2. Have all hazardous materials been inventoried and the inventory made available to all employees?
- ☐ ☐ 3. Have employees been trained in the use of hazardous materials that they might use or come in contact with?
- ☐ ☐ 4. Are all hazardous material containers properly labeled?
- ☐ ☐ 5. Are Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) available for all hazardous materials?
- ☐ ☐ 6. Are all containers of hazardous materials properly stored?

APPENDIX B

The Office of the General Counsel developed the following "Assumption of Risk" form that provides legal protection to NRCS in certain instances when non-governmental passengers fly in NRCS furnished aircraft. This signed statement provides legal protection when the purpose of the non-governmental passenger being in the aircraft does not directly relate to NRCS activities. This statement should be obtained by and filed in the local NRCS office.

Assumption of Risk

I, _____, of the State of _____, do understand that there is risk involved in my being on the flight of the Natural Resources Conservation Service aircraft. Such risk may result in the damage or loss of my personal property, as well as injuries to myself or even death. Knowing the possible risks to life and property, I do hereby agree to assume the risk of such loss of property, and possible injuries to myself or possible loss of life. Such risk is assumed, and do hereby agree to hold and save the United States, its servants, agency, and employees, harmless, for myself and my heirs, administrators, and assignees and to assume such risk from any dangers of such flight due to or resulting from any act, or omission to act, on the part of any such employees, servants, or agents of the United States, as well as against the United States. I also assume the risk of any misconduct on its or their part, as well as the failure of said aircraft, for any reason.

Witness:
